

Weekly COVID-19 Update – Sept 17, 2021: Hospitalizations and Case Numbers Continue Concerning Trend Upward

DOVER (SEPTEMBER 17, 2021) – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) is providing an update on the most recent statistics related to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Delaware, as of 6 p.m. Thursday, September 16, 2021.

A total of 127,222 positive cases of COVID-19 among Delaware residents have been reported to DPH since March 11, 2020. The seven-day average of new positive cases increased to 472 as of Thursday, September 16, 2021.

As of Tuesday, September 14, the seven-day average for the percentage of total tests that were positive was 8.4%, a decrease from 8.7% as of Tuesday, September 7. There is a two-day lag for presenting data related to percent of tests that are positive to account for the time delay between the date of the test and the date that DPH receives the test result.

In addition, 259 individuals are currently hospitalized due to COVID-19 in Delaware, an increase of seven from last week. Forty-two of the hospitalized persons are critically ill, an increase of four from last week.

A total of 1,913 Delawareans have died due to complications from COVID-19. Thirteen deaths were reported in the past week, five of which were from a review of vital statistics. The total number of individuals who have died from COVID-19 range in age from younger than 5 to 104 years old.

FDA Advisory Committee Votes to Recommend Booster Doses for Certain Populations:

Today, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) vaccine advisory committee met to discuss authorizing booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine for the general public. The committee voted unanimously to recommend expanding the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to allow booster doses of the Pfizer BioNTech mRNA vaccine for individuals age 65 and older, and individuals at high risk of severe COVID-19 starting six months or more after they received their second dose. Also included in the recommended EUA expansion are health care workers and others at high risk for occupational exposure. This announcement does not apply to individuals who received the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccines initially, due to limited available data to support an expansion of the use of those vaccines. As in the past, the FDA is expected to formalize and quickly sign off on the committee's recommendation.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) still needs to meet to provide final recommendations on specific criteria such as what constitutes high risk of severe COVID-19. ACIP is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, September 22. The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) will await those findings before moving forward with the Pfizer boosters for qualifying individuals.

"We are encouraged by this news and optimistic that a booster dose will increase protection for many Delawareans from severe COVID-19," said DPH Director, Dr. Karyl Rattay. "We know the Delta variant is particularly contagious and vaccination is really our best chance at protecting ourselves. We look forward to ACIP's recommendations."

Once approved by ACIP, vaccine providers and the public will receive further information from DPH about who should receive a booster most immediately. Qualifying individuals who previously received two doses of Pfizer, will be able to get a booster dose at a variety of sites, including participating

medical provider, pharmacy, or DPH Standing Vaccine clinic at the Blue Hen Corporate Center, Georgetown Plaza, Canby Park in Wilmington or University Plaza in Newark.

As a reminder, Delawareans who have certain immunocompromising conditions including those who have received organ or stem cell transplants, are undergoing treatment for HIV or cancer, or who are taking medication that suppresses the immune system, are currently eligible to receive a third dose of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, if they completed their second dose at least 28 days prior. DPH is also encouraging providers to consider whether those who reside in long-term care facilities and seniors, especially those who are over age 85, should receive a third dose at this time.

If you have not yet been vaccinated and are eligible, know that vaccines are the best protection we have against COVID-19 and circulating variants. The science is clear that the vaccines are extremely safe and effective and Delawareans who are fully vaccinated have significant protection from COVID-19 infection and serious illness. All qualifying Delawareans should get vaccinated. For the latest information on the COVID-19 vaccine and the vaccination rollout in Delaware, visit de.gov/getmyvaccine.

COVID-19 Vaccinations:

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 77.4% of Delawareans ages 18+ have received at least one dose of the vaccine. As of 12:01 a.m. September 17, 2021, a total of 1,146,696 administered doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been reported to the state's immunization information system, DelVAX. Among Delawareans 12+, 568,719 have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 512,701 Delawareans are fully vaccinated. Delaware's latest COVID-19 vaccination statistics can be found under the Vaccine Tracker dashboard at de.gov/healthycommunity.

COVID-19 Case Vaccination Status Report:

The following report captures a weekly breakdown of vaccination status for cases, deaths, and hospitalizations for the time frame for September 6 – September 12. The report highlights the significant percentage of cases and hospitalized individuals in Delaware who are unvaccinated, or only partially vaccinated. Vaccination continues to be the most important factor in reducing deaths and hospitalizations from COVID-19.

| Weekly Overview (9/6 -9/12) | |
|--|------|
| Unvaccinated Cases | |
| Total Unvaccinated / Partially Vaccinated Cases | 2421 |
| Total Cases | 3192 |
| Percent of Unvaccinated / Partially Vaccinated Cases | 76% |
| Hospitalizations | |
| Unvaccinated / Partially Vaccinated Hospitalized Cases | 103 |
| Total Hospitalized Cases | 132 |
| Percent of Unvaccinated / Partially Vaccinated Hospitalized Cases | 78% |
| Deaths | |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Unvaccinated / Partially Vaccinated COVID-19 Deaths | 2 |
| Total COVID-19 Deaths | 4 |
| Percent of Unvaccinated / Partially Vaccinated COVID-19 Deaths | 50% |

Breakthrough Cases:

To date, 512,701 Delawareans have been fully vaccinated. Of those, there have been 2,900 breakthrough cases of COVID-19, occurring in approximately six-tenths of 1 percent of vaccinated individuals. Fifty-three of the reported breakthrough cases identified since vaccinations began involved hospitalizations and 31 individuals passed away, although it does not mean COVID-19 was the cause of death. Breakthrough cases continue to be extremely rare given the total number of persons who are fully vaccinated, and the science is clear, the best way to prevent serious illness from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated.

A breakthrough case is defined as testing positive for COVID-19 after an individual has been fully vaccinated for two weeks or more – although it does not mean that the infection actually occurred after vaccination.

Update on COVID-19 Variant Cases in Delaware:

As of Friday, September 17, the Division of Public Health has identified the following COVID-19 variants in Delaware through routine surveillance of test specimens. These variants are based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) list of Variants of Concern and Variants of Interest. *The below table represents cumulative totals.*

| |
|----------------------------|
| Variants of Concern |
|----------------------------|

| Variant | Origin | # of cases |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Alpha/B.1.1.7 | United Kingdom | 1008 |
| Beta/B.1.351 | South Africa | 1 |
| Gamma/P.1 | Brazil | 64 |
| Delta/B.1.617.2 | India | 797 |

| Variants of Interest | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Variant | Origin | # of cases |
| Eta/B.1.525 | UK/Nigeria (formerly New York, US) | 2 |
| Iota/B.1.526/B.1526.1 | New York, US | 352 |

Of the test samples that were sequenced in the last week, 170 (73.9%) of the 230 test samples sequenced at the DPH Lab were positive for a variant strain, as were 74 additional specimens sequenced at an outside lab. All but one of the 244 variant positive samples this week were identified as the Delta variant strain. The Delaware Public Health Laboratory has sequenced 4,505 specimens for COVID-19 variant strains to date.

Virus mutation is common. Sequencing for variants is a complex process and is not used for diagnosing COVID-19 but is used after a positive case of COVID-19 has been identified for surveillance purposes, or in identifying the presence of a variant strain in the community. Because these variants may spread more easily, it is even more important that unvaccinated individuals who are more susceptible to getting COVID-19 continue taking the necessary ladders to avoid spreading the virus – wearing a mask, washing your hands, and being cautious when attending large gatherings.

For more information regarding CDC variant classifications, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/>

<variant-surveillance/variant-info.html>.

DPH COVID Vaccine Mobile Units:

DPH officials in partnership with medical staff from the Delaware National Guard (DNG) have launched mobile units to offer COVID-19 vaccines in underserved communities. Medically trained DNG staff are offering the Pfizer vaccine (for ages 12+) and the Johnson & Johnson vaccine (for persons 18+). These mobile units are visiting communities with low vaccination rates in an effort to eliminate potential barriers to access. The mobile units, which utilize trailers to transport the vaccine and provide vaccinations, are scheduled to visit these communities in New Castle, Kent and Sussex counties next week. COVID-19 testing will be available at each location.

Monday, September 20

Bethel Villa, 499 Lombard Street, Wilmington, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, September 21

Kohl's, 299 North Dupont Highway, Dover, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Lowe's, 1450 North Dupont Highway, Dover, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday, September 22

Wilmington Farmers Market, 1000 N. Market St., Wilmington, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Williams State Service Center, 805 River Road, Dover, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Williams State Service Center, 805 River Road, Dover, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Adams Four Shopping Center, Wilmington, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 23

Dollar General, 701 North Porter Street, Seaford, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Bethel Market, 7743 Main Street, Bethel, 1:00 p.m. 3:00 p.m.

Friday, September 24

Brandywine Village, 99 East 19th Street, Wilmington, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

*dates may be rescheduled if there is inclement weather

For a full list of community-based events statewide including those organized by vaccinating partners and community groups at de.gov/getmyvaccine.

Long-term Care Statistics:

As of 6:00 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 16, there have been a total of 2,884 positive COVID-19 cases involving long-term care residents, and 840 residents of Delaware long-term care facilities have died from complications related to COVID-19.

Symptoms and Testing:

It's especially important for unvaccinated persons to be aware of and self-monitor for the symptoms of COVID-19. DPH recommends that unvaccinated people get tested once a week. Even fully vaccinated persons should get tested if they develop symptoms or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

If you are sick with any of the following symptoms, stay home: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, chills, shaking with chills, loss of smell or taste, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or headache or congestion or runny nose without a known cause such as allergies. Other

symptoms such as abdominal pain or lack of appetite have been identified as potential symptoms related to COVID-19 and may prompt further screening, action or investigation by a primary care provider.

Individuals with general questions about COVID-19 should call Delaware 2-1-1, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can text their ZIP code to 898-211, or email delaware211@uwde.org. Hours of operation are:

Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Medically related questions regarding testing, symptoms, and health-related guidance can be submitted by email at DPHCall@delaware.gov.

Delawareans 18 or older are encouraged to download COVID Alert DE, Delaware's free exposure notification app to help protect your neighbors while ensuring your privacy. Download on the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#)

Questions related to business re-openings or operations as businesses re-open should go to COVID19FAQ@delaware.gov. Questions regarding unemployment claims should be emailed to: UIClaims@delaware.gov.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, go to de.gov/coronavirus.